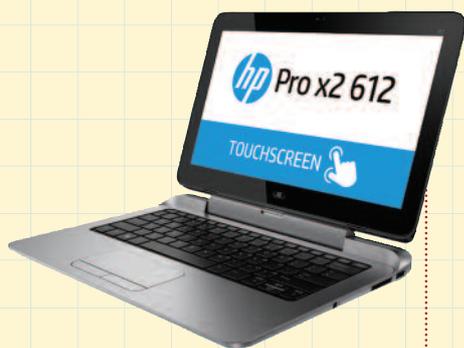# TOOLS of the TRADE

Hewlett-Packard Pro x2 612

The Pro x2 612 is HP's first detachable two-in-one notebook/tablet designed for business users. It offers a full-powered notebook with a fourth generation Intel Core i3 or i5 processor, a 12.5" diagonal HD screen that can be used with a Wacom pen digitizer, 64GB to 256GB of internal memory on a solid-state drive, and Windows 8.1 Pro 64. There are a number of basic configurations available. You can buy just the tablet, just the standard detachable notebook combination with a keyboard power dock, or just the notebook with a lighter keyboard for traveling. The main differences with the keyboards involve weight and battery life. The Pro x2 612 comes with a backlit, spill-resistant keyboard dock that has a built-in spare battery. The dock/keyboard brings the weight of the notebook up to 4.09 lbs., but that's offset with an increase of total runtime to about 14 hours. Overall, the Pro x2 612 is 12.48" × 9.43" × 0.92" in its clamshell configuration.

You have a choice of either a 12.5" HD slim LED touch screen with 1,366 × 768 pixels or a 12.5" FHD slim LED at 1,920 × 1,080 pixels. Slots and ports include: microSD and micro SIM (tablet), SD (power keyboard), and USB 3.0 (tablet and power keyboard). The HP security features make this notebook enterprise-ready with HP Sure Start, HP BIOSphere, HP Client Security, and an optional fingerprint reader for the touch screen. This notebook will be available in September.
www.hp.com

Fujitsu ScanSnap Evernote Edition

The Evernote edition of Fujitsu's ScanSnap desktop scanner was customized for Evernote cloud service subscribers. With the push of a button, it scans and files your pictures, receipts, business cards, and documents into your Evernote notebooks. The hardware scans 25 pages (A4/letter-size) per minute and 50 images per minute in duplex mode (one image on each side). Resolutions are up to 300 DPI for color and grayscale or 600 DPI for monochrome. You can stack a mix of different documents in the 50-sheet automatic document feeder, and it doesn't need any help sorting because it senses each document's size. The Evernote service app has evolved to a very sophisticated state, and the ScanSnap Evernote was specifically designed to handle simplified direct archiving to one of the most popular cloud services. But that means you can't scan to programs running on your computer, such as optical character recognition (OCR) transcription. You also can't scan to produce an editable text file. If you aren't an Evernote user, but the idea of a dedicated scanner/filer for a cloud service for all or part of your document needs sounds interesting, you can get a free subscription to Evernote to try it out before buying the ScanSnap Evernote. The scanner is compatible with Windows and Mac and can be connected via a USB cable or Wi-Fi connection. It weighs 6.5 lbs. and measures 11.5" × 6.2" × 6.6". With the purchase of a scanner you get one year of Evernote Premium free—12GB of storage valued at $45.
www.evernote.com

Withings Activité

The Withings Activité isn't at all what it looks like. It looks like an elegant Swiss watch, but it's actually a fitness tracker. It was designed in Paris and has a thin body, traditional analog display, and a leather strap from the ancestral Tanneries Haas leather manufacturer in France. But it also comes with an interchangeable plastic strap for when you exercise. A discrete digital system reads data from the accelerometer that detects motion when you walk, run, or swim. It logs daily activities, steps taken, and calories burned. The sensors can detect active and sleep modes and will monitor sleep patterns, including the time you fall asleep and length of light

and deep sleep. There's also a vibrating alarm clock function. It connects via Bluetooth LE (low energy) to your iOS devices, and you can download the Withings Health Mate app, which lets you develop your own activity plans and goals. There are two dials on the watch: one shows the time, and the other displays the percentage you have progressed toward your goals. You activate the subdial by tapping on the crystal, which is made of un-breakable sapphire glass. The watch is water resistant up to 50 meters (about 164') and runs on conventional, replace-able watch batteries—no cables or recharging. www.withings.com

GE Link Light Bulbs

As the mobile phone continues its progression toward becoming the eventual remote control for most of our daily ac-tivities, another con-nection between your smartphone and smart home has been forged with GE's new Link-connected LED lighting system. In late June,

GE announced three affordable home lighting bulbs that are controlled by the new Wink app that runs on your iPhone or An-droid mobile phone. There's a 60-watt replacement soft white LED (2700K A19 shape), an in-door soft white floodlight LED (2700K BR30 shape)—both for general interior lighting—and an indoor/outdoor-rated bright white (3700K) spotlight LED used for outdoor security or as a spotlight. They connect to your mobile device via the Wink app, which has simple slider controls for all the connected fixtures. The Wink system also can con-nect to door locks, heating and air-conditioning controls, blinds, Dropcams, alarms, sprinklers, and more. GE's bulbs and Wink hub are available at Home Depot. www.gelighting.com, www.winkapp.com

TECH FORUM

Two Very Nice Internet Portfolios

By Michael Castelluccio, Editor

Remember when going online began with dial tones and screeches from your pokey 56K modem dialing in and directing you to the text-heavy homepage of the AltaVista search engine? Consider how different things are now. Browsers, on a decent network, are instant-on, and the Internet has become very graphics-intensive and fast. To-day's version of AltaVista is Google, the number one vis-ited site of any registered address online. By comparison, Google is like a wind tunnel compared to those original search engines that returned only a few pages at a time. It returns libraries' worth of items blasted back in fractions of a second. The problem now has become dealing with the material coming back at you in torrents.

One solution is to get a serviceable portfolio in which you can store material for reading or studying later. *Web-ster's* defines a portfolio as "a hinged cover or flexible case for carrying loose papers, pictures, or pamphlets." The Internet version of the portfolio carry-case has a surpris-ing number of advantages over the traditional leather variety.

PARSERS

Although they're often called read-it-later apps—or even TiVo for the Web—the two portfolios discussed here are more properly classified as article parsers. That's because the most important thing they do is parse the content you're saving and republish it in a simplified magazine style. To read the same article on the Web, you often have to pinch the screen or click to zoom in and out to get rid of the navigation bar on the left side of the page and the ads or indexes on the right. Then you probably have to keep realigning the page when you scroll because the content likely shifts again. Click to another page, and you're back to doing your own custom page redesign, on the fly, to view it on your phone or tablet.

Content on the read-it-later apps appear as fixed, properly fitted, single-page presentations containing only the text, any photos or videos, and correct author attribution. If the content is multipage, scroll or turn the pages the way you would on an e-book reader. The downloaded article has been custom republished for you and stored for later, even when you're offline. Even long e-mails, recipes, videos, or Twitter posts get saved to uncluttered magazine-style pages to be read or watched later and then either discarded or archived.

Two of the most successful of these portfolio apps are Instapaper ($3.99) and Pocket (free), which was previously called Read It Later. The emphasis for both is on mobile versions, and they support a similar group of devices. Instapaper officially supports iOS, Android, and Kindle, but you can also export ePub-formatted pages to other readers like Nook and Kobo. Pocket can run on iOS, Android, and the Web. There are also third-party clients that support Windows Phone, BlackBerry, WebOS, and others.

INSTAPAPER AND POCKET

Both of these applications have been around for a while—Instapaper launched in January 2008, and Pocket was available months earlier in August 2007. Two things accelerated the growth and popularity of the apps. First there was the massive migration in computing from desktop/laptop to mobile and tablet. The second was the companies' increased attention to the design of their latest versions.

Early on, Nate Weiner, Pocket's founder, switched focus from an emphasis on perfecting code that works well to an obsession with design. At the debut of the third generation of his Text View code in 2010, Weiner announced some changes. On his Read It Later blog, he posted "The Insane New Article Parser." In it he explained, "You'll notice that I am no longer referring to the Article View as the 'text view.' The first reason is simply because the Article View now offers images and video, not just text. The second reason is because calling it the 'text view' leads to some incorrect assumptions about what it is supposed to do." Weiner realized the page needs more than just the words and the white space. There's an elegance beyond the code that's also achievable.

The shift in attention paid to the medium, not just the message, paid off for Weiner. In reviews comparing the two apps, it isn't unusual to read about a preference for Pocket based on design, not technical excellence. Instapocket has undergone its own redesign, but there are still differences between the two.

Both apps have several ways for getting online content to their parsing engines. The companies have formed partnerships with other apps like Flipboard, *The Onion*, Tweetbot, *NetNewsWire*. The transfer from these sources is a simple one-button tap. But you also can download content using an e-mail address, and there are a variety of other ways that are specific to your browser or operating system.

Reading on the apps is like reading on an e-book device. You can change the font and font size—two Pocket fonts and 14 choices on Instapaper. There are three colors for the page—white, sepia, and black (night mode)—and there are connections for social media sharing or e-mailing copies to friends. Instapaper will even let you modify paragraph and line spacing.

If you're the kind of person who likes to save some of what you come across in your daily browsing online, but your bookmark list has sprouted into a banyan tree, you might want to try either or both of these portfolios. They're a great way back to a more comfortable reading format, away from the clutter of the Web, and both provide a place for what you've found, conveniently put away offline in your own portfolio.

LONGFORM

There's another app that's worth mentioning. It's an iOS app called Longform ($2.99), and it's designed for long-form content—about 1,000 words or more. Instead of you having to find content, Longform lists dozens of world-class publications, and you choose those you want to follow. Longform posts a constantly updated selection of articles from the magazines, and you pick which ones you want to read. They're longer pieces from *The New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, *Business Week*, *The Atlantic*, *National Geographic*, *The Washington Post*, *Rolling Stone*, *Harper's*, and many others. Longform articles also can be read on Pocket and Instapaper. To get an idea of the range of topics available, go to www.longform.org and click on the "Best of 2013" tab at the top. Chris Walters of Booksprung says, "It's a portable reading room where new issues arrive daily. It's an evolving anthology of nonfiction journalism." There's a fiction category there, as well. **SF**